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Executive Summary

Title: The Strategic Importance of Strategic Communications

Author: Major Frank K. Chawk III, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: In today's globally connected world, the United States Government needs to devise and implement a program to drive its strategic communications and successfully use information as an instrument of national power.

Discussion: The United States is the sole super-power in the early twenty-first century, yet it fails to implement a cohesive strategic communications plan to complement its diplomatic, military, and economic instruments of national power. With forces deployed around the globe, America has relied on its hard instruments of power to accomplish strategic objectives. The lack of structure and vision make current attempts to use information pale in comparison the country's use of diplomacy and military forces. Particularly while fighting the Global War on Terrorism, it is important for the United States to use each and every one of its strengths, especially information. As many recent studies have found, the use of information may be the critical element of the government's national strategy.

Conclusion: The globally interconnected twenty-first century demands that the U.S. use an integrated combination of its hard and soft power to be successful. Effectively integrating and using all instruments of national power will not only balance the way that the United States works with other nations, it will also allow the nation to use the right tools to solve the right problems and maintain its status as a super-power.

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"The political objective is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose" -- Carl von Clausewitz¹

The U.S. Government must have a cohesive, strategic voice to use its information instrument of national power effectively in the twenty-first century. The U.S. Department of Defense espouses that there are four instruments of national power: Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economy (DIME),² yet there is no single department, agency, or organization responsible for the message that the U.S. sends to its adversaries, the world, or its own citizens. In today's globally connected world the U.S. needs to devise and implement a program to drive strategic communications to use its information instrument of national power successfully.

The other instruments of national power (diplomacy, military, and economy) are well-represented and known by specific organizations. Diplomacy: The U.S. Department of State (DoS) helps to shape a freer, more secure, and more prosperous world through formulating, representing and implementing the President's foreign policy.³ Military: The Department of Defense (DoD) provides the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country.⁴ Economy: The Department of Treasury (DoT) serves the American people and strengthens national security by managing the U.S. Government's finances effectively, promoting economic growth and stability, and ensuring the safety, soundness, and security of the U.S. and international financial systems.⁵ The historic mission of the Department of Commerce (DoC) is to foster, promote, and develop the foreign and domestic commerce of the United States. This has evolved as a result of legislative and administrative additions to encompass the responsibility to foster, serve, and promote the nation's economic development and technological advancement.⁶

Missing from the DIME construct is an organization that leads the effort to implement the information instrument of power. The closest the United States has is the Office of the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. This department-level shortage leaves other agencies to devise their own strategic communications plans without an overarching government message or direction at a time when information may be the most important key to strategic success.

For this paper, the following definitions will be used for the various disciplines:

Strategic communication — Focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power.⁷

Public diplomacy — Those overt international public information activities of the United States Government designed to promote United States foreign policy objectives by seeking to understand, inform, and influence foreign audiences and opinion makers, and by broadening the dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad. Also, In peace building, civilian agency efforts to promote an understanding of the reconstruction efforts, rule of law, and civic responsibility through public affairs and international public diplomacy operations. Its objective is to promote and sustain consent for peace building both within the host nation and externally in the region and in the larger international community.⁸

Public affairs — Those public information, command information, and community relations activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the Department of Defense.⁹

Information operations — The integrated employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception, and operations security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities, to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own.¹⁰

The President of the United States establishes the direction and vision for his administration in many ways. One step is forming his National Security Council (NSC), which is chaired by the President himself. As regular members, the council has the Vice

President, Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Defense, and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of National Intelligence serve as advisors for military and intelligence matters.¹¹ Among others, State (Diplomacy), Treasury (Economy), and Defense (Military) are each mentioned and represented, yet information is not. National Security Presidential Directive 1 (NSPD-1) further outlines the organization of the NSC.

Published 13 February 2001, seven months *before* 9/11, the current NSPD makes no mention of any office responsible for information. The closest possible organization is the Director of Information Security Oversight Office, but its mission has little to do with the use of information as an instrument of national power.¹² (The Information Security Oversight Office is responsible to the President for policy and oversight of the Government-wide security classification system and the National Industrial Security Program).¹³

In light of this organization, perhaps the use of information was not a high enough priority before the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. Despite changes to government structure and interagency coordination, not enough has changed over the past seven years to rectify that strategic shortfall.

Government Structure

The federal government is broken down into three, independent branches: Legislative, judicial, and executive. The legislative branch consists of the bicameral Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives. The judicial branch hears cases that challenge or require interpretation of the legislation that the Congress passed and the

President signed. The power of the executive branch is vested in the President himself, who also serves as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.¹⁴

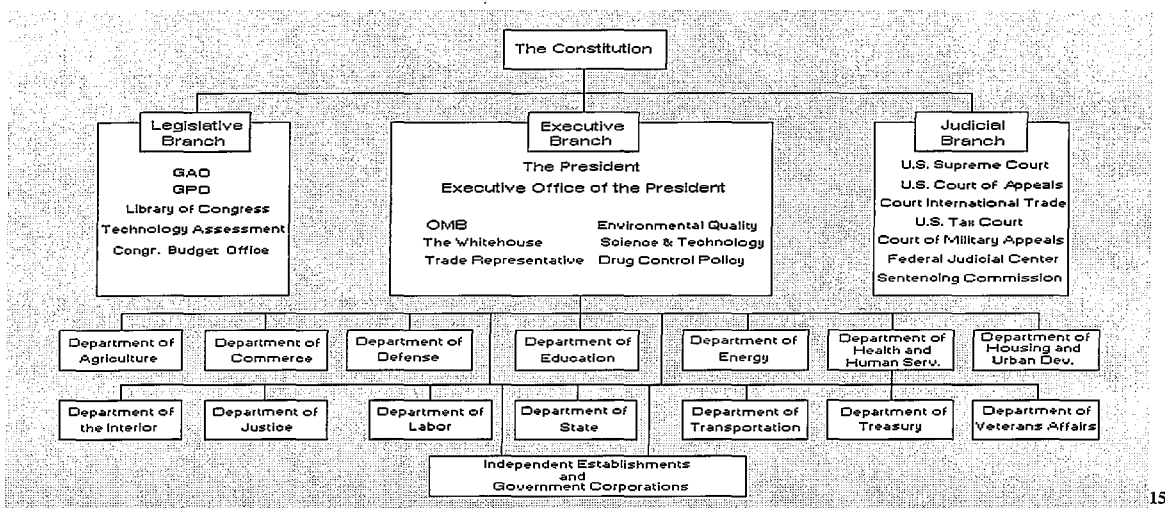


Figure 1: Structure of the United States government. Three branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. Departments under the Executive branch will be discussed in further detail.

In the executive branch, the President appoints his cabinet and oversees the various agencies and departments of the federal government.¹⁶ One of the principal purposes of the cabinet is to advise the President on any subject he may require relating to the duties of their respective offices.¹⁷ Figure 2 shows a graphic depiction of the President's Department level organizations.

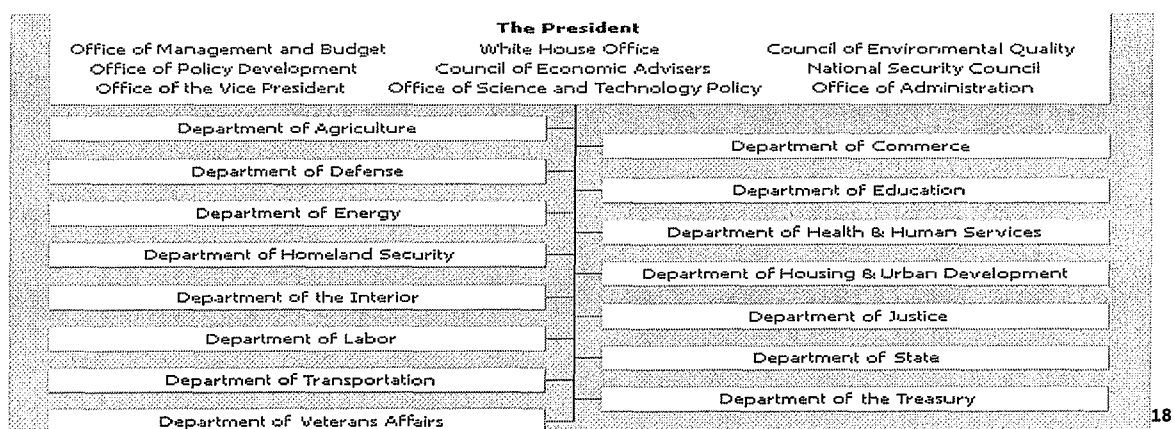


Figure 2: Department level organizations under the Executive branch of the U.S. Government. There are multiple organizations, yet no single organization exists to lead the use of information as an instrument of national power.

The President's strategic vision is articulated and shared in the President's National Security Strategy (NSS), the most recent of which was published in March 2006.¹⁹ That publication outlines the President's views on security and how the United States will deal with strategic issues. In the most recent NSS, the words 'economy' or 'economic' are used ninety-five times, 'military' is mentioned twenty-two times, and 'diplomacy' and 'diplomatic' are used eleven times. 'Information' or 'inform' are used a mere eight times, although the President states that the U.S. must win the "war of ideas."²⁰

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-1 (MCDP 1-1), Strategy, defines the national strategy as "The art and science of developing and using political, economic, military, and informational powers."²¹ For the DoD or its subordinate elements to tie in to a national strategy and use information as an instrument of national power, the government must first determine how it hopes to use that power and give direction to the departments. The NSS states, "*All instruments of power – diplomatic, economic, military, and information – must be brought to bear and exploited to the fullest in war.*"²²

Because the NSS serves as a broad, overarching document, its influence can be seen in the Secretary of Defense's National Defense Strategy (NDS)²³ and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's National Military Strategy (NMS).²⁴ These documents mention the importance of communications and information, yet the bureaucratic structures created with the National Security Act of 1947 continue much as they did during the cold war.²⁵ The governmental structure remains slow to change due to years of steady growth, expansion, and development during the 1950s, '60s, '70s, and '80s. That structure will not necessarily function due to the end of the cold war, the information revolution, and the irregular nature of the current threat.

The focus of the NSS was clearly overshadowed by the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001. When the NSS was released in March 2006, the President's National Security Advisor, Mr. Stephen Hadley, stated, "The President continues to mobilize all elements of America's national power to defeat the terrorist threat" and that the NSS recognizes that the global war on terror is "both a battle of arms and a battle of ideas." He summarizes by stating, "We must think differently and organize ourselves more creatively if we are to be effective."²⁶ There is little doubt that the government needs to think differently about national security than it did during the Cold War. Additionally, the U.S. must admit that it must use the instruments of power more effectively and make organizational changes to solve today's problems.

One recent publication that indicates the government understands the importance of using information is the "U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication,"²⁷ released by the President in June of 2007. This document is *the first* national strategy for public diplomacy. The strategy states that the U.S. must address both mass audiences and specific target audiences, and that the message must always be tailored to the target audience. The document identifies the three main priorities for Public Diplomacy as: 1) Expand education and exchange programs, 2) Modernize communications, and 3) Promote the "diplomacy of deeds."²⁸ It also reinforces the idea that the U.S. is engaged in a struggle of ideas and ideologies and that public diplomacy, along with defense, homeland security, and intelligence, must be treated as a national security priority.

The State Department released a similar document titled, "Counterinsurgency for U.S. Government Policy Makers – A Work in Progress" in October of 2007. Most notable,

State reinforces the need for a unified, holistic government effort in which an effective information campaign would be indispensable.²⁹ In the State Department's diagram below, the information campaign is shown as the base for the critical pillars of security, political, and economy. Information must support each of the other major elements of the COIN strategy in order to ensure that the efforts are unified.

Comprehensive Approach to Counterinsurgency

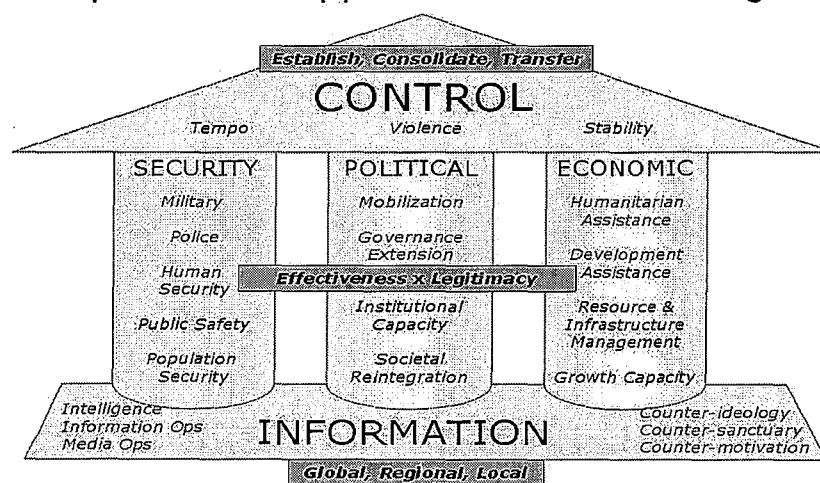


Figure 3: The frame is structured as a base (Information), three pillars (Security, Political and Economic) and a roof (Control). This approach builds on classic COIN theory but also incorporates best practices that have emerged through experience in numerous complex operations over the past several decades.³⁰

The problem the government faces is that the structure of the Cold War is not well suited for the globally connected 21st century. In the Cold War, Soviet attempts to challenge the U.S. diplomatically, economically, and militarily ultimately failed and the U.S. outpaced the Soviet Union until the U.S.S.R. collapsed.

According the Djerejian report, published in October 2003, public diplomacy helped win the Cold War, and it has the potential to help win the war on terror.³¹ Reviewing the current (government) structure and the U.S. government's ability to operate in the current environment, the report states, "The system is outmoded, lacks resources."³²

The fall of the Soviet Union and the new global information environment require the United States to restructure and re-think how the U.S. uses its instruments of national power.

Today, the U.S. is not facing a state enemy that wishes to compete with the country's economy, diplomacy, and military. Those strengths have been marginalized in a very clever way, leveling the playing field for global, non-state, terrorist organizations. The explosion of information technology from the 1990s through present day gives America's adversaries an incredible advantage that simply did not exist during the Cold War. That advantage is due to the ability to use information to their advantage to target, intimidate, or influence people in the Middle East, the U.S., and throughout the world.

The Historical Use of Information

Throughout the Cold War, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) was the lead organization charged to conduct public information in support of U.S. foreign policy. While traditionally not part of DoS, the USIA worked closely with State, especially overseas, where it was also known as the U.S. Information Service (USIS). The mission of the USIA was "to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics in promotion of the U.S. national interest, and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions, and their counterparts abroad."³³ According to the Planning Group for Integration of USIA into the DoS (in June of 1997), public diplomacy was defined as follows:

Public diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest and the national security of the United States through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.³⁴

In 1999, the USIA was incorporated into the Department of State. In essence, this placed the executive agent in charge of information (USIA) *under* the Department responsible for diplomacy (State). While Dr. Condoleezza Rice is known across the globe as America's Secretary of State, very few know that the most recent Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs was Mrs. Karen Hughes, much less what she did to enhance the security of the nation.³⁵

The position of Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy was created in 1998 by the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act. Subdivision A of the Act, known as the Foreign Affairs Agencies Consolidation Act of 1998, abolished the USIA and transferred its functions to the Department of State. The integration took place on Oct 1, 1999. Since that time, there have been four separate Under Secretaries:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Evelyn Simonowitz Lieberman | Oct 1, 1999 until Jan 19, 2001 |
| 2. Charlotte L. Beers | Oct 1, 2001 until March 28, 2003 |
| 3. Margaret DeBardeleben Tutwiler | Dec 15, 2003 until June 16, 2004 |
| 4. Karen P. Hughes | Aug 15, 2005 until Dec 13, 2007 ³⁶ |

As the timelines and periods when the position remained unfilled illustrate, the position is not viewed as critical to the functioning of U.S. Public Diplomacy. The position has remained vacant after each and every Under Secretary's tenure, and has been vacant since mid-December when Mrs. Hughes resigned.

Mrs. Hughes was nominated for the position in May 2005 and she was sworn in on August 15, 2005. After two and a half years, she announced her resignation on October 31st, 2007 and left the position on December 13th. Several days before her resignation, the Voice of America released an article stating that President Bush wanted the current director of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Mr. James Glassman, to assume the position.³⁷ Mr. Glassman has been nominated for the position and gave his opening statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 30 January, 2008. As of the time of this writing, has not yet been confirmed for the position.³⁸

Speaking at the announcement of her resignation, Mrs. Hughes said she felt she had fulfilled her mission by "transforming public diplomacy and making it a national security priority central to everything we do in government."³⁹ She claimed to have transformed public diplomacy through effective media outreach, media hubs, outreach to young people and women, issuing student visas, nearly doubling the budget to almost \$900 Million per year, and implementing nearly 80% of the Djerejian report's recommendations.⁴⁰

From the recently published "National Strategic Communications Plan," Mrs. Hughes highlighted three imperatives for the U.S. Government: Hope, marginalizing extremists, and common interests and values:

1. Offer people across the world a positive vision of hope that is rooted in our deepest values, our belief in liberty, justice, opportunity, and respect for all.
2. Isolate and marginalize the violent extremists and undermine their efforts to try to appropriate religion to their cause.
3. Actively nurture and foster common interests and common values between Americans and people of different countries, cultures, and faiths across the world.

Despite these steps to develop an effective strategic communications plan, the success has been marginal to date. As recently as November 2007, the current Secretary of *Defense*, Robert Gates, called for a dramatic increase in the U.S. budget for diplomacy and foreign aid for the Department of State. Mr. Gates stated that the abolishment of the U.S. Information Agency, which effectively gutted America's ability to engage and communicate with the rest of the world, was even more shortsighted than downsizing the Army by nearly forty percent and the Central Intelligence Agency's clandestine service by thirty percent.⁴¹ He went on to say, "We are miserable at communicating to the rest of the world what we are about as a society and culture...It is just plain embarrassing that Al Qaeda is better at communicating its message on the internet than America." Noting the importance of information, he stated that "One of the most important lessons of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is that military success is not sufficient to win."⁴²

While there are individuals and organizations that believe the USIA should be resurrected as a separate effort, others do not advocate such a move. Those that do argue for the re-establishment of the USIA often cite inadequate funding, lack of coordination with other agencies, and a lack of strategic direction.⁴³ While those are shortfalls the government must address, simply reinstating the USIA will not rectify the problems. First,

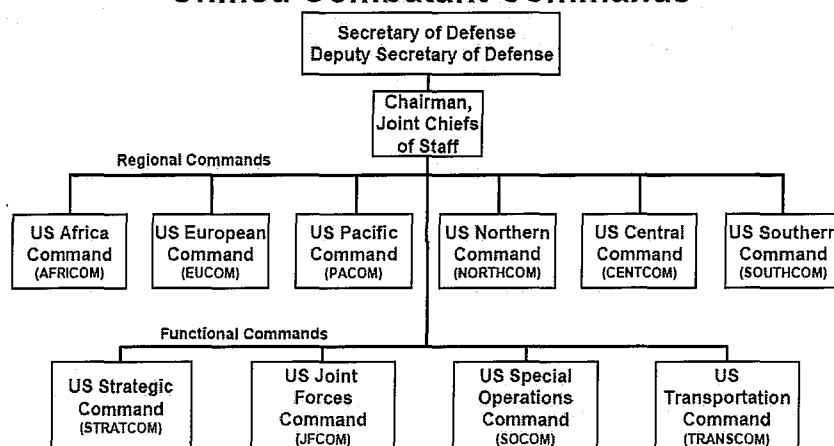
the government must realize that it needs to fund, coordinate, and guide the use of strategic communications. Then, once the budgetary and direction issues are resolved, an organization can be given the mission of implementing the strategic direction.⁴⁴

Department of Defense

Because of the strategic gap, lower levels of the government have been forced to devise their own strategic communications plan. The DoD appears to be making continued progress vis-à-vis the way it trains and uses information. At the joint level, the Joint Forces Staff College offers the Joint Command and Control Information Operations Planner's school. In Monterrey, California, the Naval Postgraduate School serves as the DoD Information Operations Center of Excellence. The DoD appears to realize the importance of structure and education for IO planners and capability specialists, but the effort remains a secondary one. Information Operations are one consideration in military planning and operations, yet it is a sub-element of operations, and at times may need to be the focus, not a sub-element of operations in general.

The Department of Defense has two main subordinate elements: The Unified Combatant Commands (COCOMs) and the Military Departments. Six of the COCOMs are regionally focused and four are functional commands. Regional COCOMs are assigned a geographic area of responsibility by the National Command Authority (NCA), while functional combatant commanders support geographic commands, conduct operations in direct support of the NCA, and may be designated as the supported combatant commander for an operation.⁴⁵ Figure 4 depicts the COCOMs who serve as operational commands for military operations around the globe.

Unified Combatant Commands

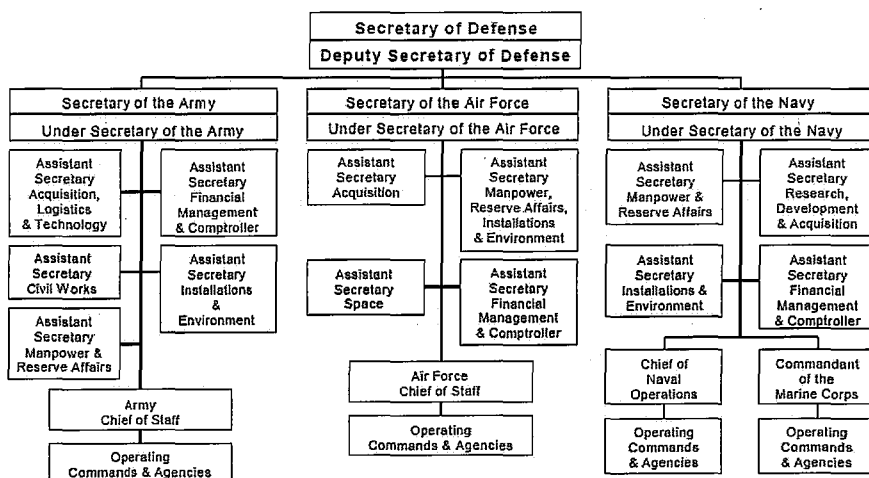


Date: January 2008 46

Figure 4: Regional and functional Combatant Commands (COCOMs) subordinate to the SecDef

Figure 5 illustrates the DoD's the Military Departments, who fill the vital role of manning, training, and equipping their respective forces. The departments are the Army, Air Force, and Navy. The Department of the Navy is further broken down below the Chief of Naval Operations (Navy) and the Commandant of the Marine Corps (USMC).

Military Departments



Date: July 1999 47

Figure 5: Military services subordinate to the Secretary of Defense. While not operational like the Combatant Commanders, service chiefs take direction from their Secretary, who is subordinate to the SecDef

From an operational perspective, officers who served on the Central Command staff, the regional COCOM responsible for the ongoing operations in the Middle East, the strategic communications process is currently disjointed and ineffective. Interviews with those who served in the Public Affairs directorate, the J3 (operations) IO, and the Strategic Communications IO "Tiger Team" revealed that there were competing interests and a lack of unity when using information.

Public Affairs and IO were never coordinated in a way that maximized their effective use. In fact, a study by the CENTCOM tiger team recommended forming a strategic communications directorate, but that recommendation was not put into effect for a variety of reasons. Regardless of those reasons, PA remained under the Commanding General's direct control, while IO remained a sub-element of J3 operations.⁴⁸

Subordinate to CENTCOM, Multi-National Forces - Iraq (MNF-I) in Baghdad was one of the key organizations to reorganize and form a Strategic Communications directorate under the leadership of Major General Vern Lessel, USAF. In an interview with General Lessel, who is currently serving as the Director of Plans, Programs, Requirements, and Assessments for the Air Force, he stated that despite their innovative restructuring to effect the way information was planned and utilized in Iraq, every other organization in MNF-I's chain of command continued the traditional structure, thereby keeping IO and PA separated. MNF-I's structure consolidated the efforts of all elements that used information, but had to deal with multiple organizations when trying to use that information. As previously stated, CENTCOM maintained PA under the command directorate, while IO remained under the J3 (operations). Similarly, units subordinate to

MNF-I (Multi-National Corps Iraq, subordinate divisions, etc) maintained separate PA and IO structures, which kept efforts separated and not integrated.

Despite current advances in the DoD's use of information, the DoD itself has struggled with how to deliver its message for years. In 2002, an article published in the New York Times discussed then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's decision to disband the Office of Strategic Influence. In February 2002, the decision ended the short-lived program to provide news items to influence public sentiment abroad. According to officials cited in the article, Mr. Rumsfeld was "deeply frustrated that the United States Government has no coherent plan for molding public opinion worldwide in favor of America in its global campaign against terrorism and militancy."⁴⁹ The Secretary's decision to close the office was driven by concerns with perception of propaganda and information control. Additionally, a recent 2007 article stated that the DoD shut down its Office of Strategic Influence over concerns that its behind-the-scenes efforts to shape public sentiment in wartime might undermine the military's credibility.⁵⁰

The DoD's most recent Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR), released in February 2006, states that the department will make revisions to its training plan to incorporate a variety of changes, including Information Operations.⁵¹ In addition to changing IO training, the QDR cites the need for more robust inter-agency coordination and interoperability. Perhaps most importantly, the QDR states:

The Department of Defense cannot meet today's complex challenges alone. Success requires unified statecraft: the ability of the U.S. Government to bring to bear all elements of national power at home and to work in close cooperation with allies and partners abroad...Today's environment demands that all agencies of government become adept at integrating their efforts into a unified strategy.⁵²

Unifying the governments efforts heed the prophetic words of Sun Tzu, "He whose ranks are united will be victorious."⁵³

The QDR also addresses the reality of America's bureaucratic structure and states that the DoD's organization is a direct result of the U.S. experience in the Cold War. Today's environment and the challenge that the U.S. faces is so immense that it "requires major shifts in strategic concepts for national security and the role of military power."⁵⁴ Addressing the broad concept information and its use, the QDR identified capability gaps in each of the primary supporting capabilities of Public Affairs, Defense Support to Public Diplomacy, Military Diplomacy, and Information Operations.

The QDR states that "Victory in the long war ultimately depends on strategic communication by the United States and its international partners" and that the United States will not win the war on terrorism or achieve its objectives "by military means alone." What the U.S. needs is the application of unified statecraft at the Federal level and in concert with allies and international partners.

DoD Contributions to Strategic Communications

The DoD's main contributions to strategic communications are information operations (IO) and Public Affairs (PA). Information Operations has existed for years as an independent discipline. Joint Publication 3-13 (JP 3-13), recently updated and released in 2006, was given additional focus and direction in the Secretary of Defense's "IO Roadmap," of October, 2003.⁵⁵ The roadmap was an attempt to focus the defense department's implementation of IO so that regional COCOMs and below could use information effectively in support of military and inter-agency operations around the globe.

The initiative should help drive IO to a more mature competency, yet without an overarching vision from the government that the DoD can follow and support, even the most successful IO at the tactical and operational levels will not compensate for the lack of strategic direction.

JP 3-13 describes information as “a strategic resource vital to national security” and defines Information Operations as follows:

The integrated employment of electronic warfare (EW), computer network operations (CNO), psychological operations (PSYOP), military deception (MILDEC), and operations security (OPSEC), in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities, to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own.⁵⁶

The Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC) in Norfolk, VA teaches definition using the acronym “COPED” for CNO, OPSEC, PSYOP, EW and (Military) Deception.

Core Capabilities

The five IO core capabilities provide commanders “the principal means of influencing an adversary and other target audiences by enabling the joint forces freedom of operation in the information environment.”⁵⁷ While some of these elements are direct results of technological advances, many of these disciplines have existed for thousands of years. Sun Tzu wrote, “All warfare is based on deception,”⁵⁸ but emphasized that the end state is what matters, not the use of a particular technique. “What is essential in war is victory, not prolonged operations.”⁵⁹ While deception and other elements of IO have existed for thousands of years, others such as CNO are direct results of the recent advances in information technology and are less than 20 years old.

Supporting Capabilities

Assisting the five core capabilities, JP 3-13 describes five IO *supporting* capabilities: Information assurance (IA), physical security, physical attack, Counterintelligence (CI), and combat camera (COMCAM). The supporting capabilities are either “directly or indirectly involved in the information environment and contribute to effective IO. They should be integrated and coordinated with the core capabilities, but also serve other wider purposes.”⁶⁰

Related Capabilities

Finally, JP 3-13 defines three IO *related* capabilities: Public Affairs (PA), Civil-Military Operations (CMO), and Defense Support to Public Diplomacy (DSPD). These related capabilities “make significant contributions to IO and must always be coordinated and integrated with the core and supporting IO capabilities. However, the primary purpose and rules under which they operate must not be compromised by IO. This requires additional care and consideration in the planning and conduct of IO. For this reason, the PA and CMO staffs particularly must work in close coordination with the IO planning staff.”⁶¹ Clearly the definition of IO as described by its core, supporting, and related capabilities is vast. Its broad nature affects multiple elements of military staffs, including operations, intelligence, command and control, fires (lethal and non-lethal), public affairs, and others.

A key concern is that of all the capabilities of IO, *Defense Support to Public Diplomacy* could be the critical weakness in our current doctrine. This is not because IO does not need to tie in to Public Diplomacy; On the contrary, this is precisely where IO must tie in with U.S. Government efforts that unify and synergize the efforts of the White

House, Department of State, Defense, et al. In fact, all information efforts, including military IO, should be a supporting element to the U.S. Government plan, yet there is not a unified, cohesive plan for other elements to support.

As previously stated, JP 3-13 defines Public Diplomacy (PD) as:

Those overt international information activities of the USG designed to promote U.S. foreign policy objectives by seeking to understand, inform, and influence foreign audiences and opinion makers and by broadening the dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad. Much of the operational level IO activity conducted in any theater will be directly linked to PD objectives.⁶²

Following the lead of JP 3-13 and the current operating environment, the Army and Marine Corps recently released the most recent edition of Field Manual 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, Counterinsurgency. This updated document serves as the best starting point for how to operate in a counterinsurgency (COIN) environment, and highlights the importance of strategic communications and how tactical actions can affect strategic (policy) goals. Updated and released in December 2006, the publication stresses the importance of legitimacy and popular opinion in fighting an insurgency. "Learning organizations defeat insurgencies; bureaucratic hierarchies do not."⁶³ "COIN thus involves the application of national power in the political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure fields and disciplines. Political and military leaders and planners should never underestimate its scale and complexity; moreover, they should recognize that the Armed Forces cannot succeed in COIN alone."⁶⁴ "Tactical actions thus must be linked not only to strategic and operational military objectives but also to the host nation's essential political goals."⁶⁵ These statements apply to all operations, including strategic communications. If the tactical does not support a strategic goal, the effort could be irrelevant.

The U.S. Marine Corps produced a complimentary manual titled A Tentative Manual for Countering Irregular Threats. This document, published in June 2006, opens by stating that the solutions to the problems we currently face require a long-term, comprehensive approach in the application of the instruments of national power, and that Marines must approach COIN prepared to fight as well as influence the environment through the use of information, humanitarian aid, economic advice, and a boost toward good governance.⁶⁶ The manual also highlights the problem that the U. S. military has not relinquished its conventional view of war that has existed since World War II, and that the Marine Corps must expand its lines of operation to include training host nation forces, essential services, economic development, governance, and information operations in order to be successful.⁶⁷ Professor Dennis Murphy at the Center for Strategic Leadership echoes this sentiment by stating, “U.S. military leaders have a cultural bias toward a kinetic solution in war that doesn’t fit this current wartime construct.”⁶⁸

Chapter Six of the Tentative Manual is dedicated to the importance of information and states, “The information line of operations is the line that most directly acknowledges the virtual domain and its direct relevance in campaign design.”⁶⁹ It also states that no amount of military might will ever be singularly decisive in the COIN environment, yet Information Operations are usually an afterthought. To alleviate this disconnect, information and operations must be integrated. There should be only one plan, not an operation plan with a *supporting* IO plan. Tying in to the strategic plan is critical, and the manual states that the information line of operations must be a “direct descendant from national or coalition political objectives for the intervention activity.”⁷⁰ All operations

must have information as a central element, and all military operations must be integrated with the national plan.

The Tentative Manual for Countering Irregular Threats also identified several key aspects to improve training for the use of information. First and foremost, leaders at all levels must be educated so that even junior leaders have an appreciation of information. The use of information and IO must be incorporated into training in “dynamic, ambiguous, and cerebrally challenging scenarios” and mobile training teams should train planners how to work in the information line of operation.⁷¹ Clearly, the USMC is looking at the importance of IO and how to improve its effectiveness in the Global War On Terror, but there is much progress that still needs to be made.

Regardless of the advances the DoD makes at the tactical and operational levels, the DoD still needs to tie in to a larger, strategic plan. As the lessons the United States learned in Vietnam demonstrate, tactical success does not guarantee strategic victory. The DoD and other department level organizations need to know what the government’s plan is for the use of strategic communications. All the different entities that represent the instruments of power must know and understand the importance of information so that those organizations can work together in a holistic manner.

Conclusion

“To bring war, or one of its campaigns to a successful close requires a thorough grasp of national policy” -- Carl von Clausewitz⁷²

As early as 2004, many of the problems discussed above were identified in The 9/11 Commission Report. The report also offered recommended solutions to correct some of the shortfalls following the attacks of September 11th. One of the most telling

statements of the findings was that "...long-term success demands the use of all elements of national power: diplomacy, intelligence, covert action, law enforcement, economic policy, foreign aid, public diplomacy, and homeland defense."⁷³ The report continues by stating, "The U.S. government must define what the message is, what it stands for."⁷⁴ Upon reviewing the government's structure, the commission found that the national security institutions of the U.S. government are still the institutions constructed to win the Cold War."⁷⁵ Clearly, each and every study released continues to show that the government structure and bureaucracy must be modified if the U.S. truly desires to use its power effectively.

For the past five years, numerous other studies have been published making a variety of recommendations to fight effectively in the Global Information Environment. One of the first such releases which was referenced earlier was The Djerejian Report of October, 2003. This report, officially titled, "Changing Minds Winning Peace – A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World" was chaired by Edward J. Djerejian and was submitted to the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives. As early as 2003, the report stated that public diplomacy required a new strategic direction that needed to be "led by the political will of the President and Congress and fueled by adequate financial and human resources."⁷⁶ When Mrs. Karen Hughes resigned from the Department of State, it was the Djerejian report that she cited as proof that her work as Under Secretary had been successful.

A similar study published by the U.S. Army War College titled "Shifting Fire - Information Effects in Counterinsurgency and Stability Operations, A Workshop Report" describes the current operating environment and opens by stating that transforming IO is

the challenge to winning the peace in the present fight. Information Operations is (or at least should be) the main effort tactically, operationally, and strategically in the current phase of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)."⁷⁷ Lessons learned from Israeli-Palestinian conflict provide critical insight to operating in a COIN environment, and should greatly assist those operating on the tactical and operational level. The report also highlights the importance of the tactical tying in to the strategic for the COIN force to be successful. Appendix A of this document offers a summary of the lessons learned from the study.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) released its Commission on Smart Power, co-chaired by Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye, in October 2007. This study highlights many of the critical issues that many across the government see and understand. Opening the executive summary by stating, "America's image and influence are in decline around the world,"⁷⁸ the report offers recommendations to correct the government's inadequate use of information in the GWOT. The study focused on five critical areas for the government to focus: 1) Alliances, Partnerships, and Institutions, 2) Global Development, 3) Public Diplomacy, 4) Economic Integration, and 5) Technology and Innovation. The opening page states that implementing an adequate strategy will require a reassessment of how the government is organized, coordinated and budgeted.⁷⁹ The CSIS recommends an integration of hard and soft national power to use the government's strengths most effectively.

Finally, depending on the target audience, the government must use technology to reach the right people with the right message at the right time. The U.S. must give audiences the information via the means those people normally receive it. A

comprehensive strategy will use international news, internet, radio, television, movies, blog sites, etc to send consistent, compelling messages. In a recent Washington Post article, President George Bush and his team demonstrated an understanding of the importance of targeting the right audience with the right medium. The President attempted to reach out by using "bloggers" who focus on military issues. Accepting the fact that blog sites are increasingly popular, the President reached out in an attempt to target those individuals. Apparently the Commander in Chief realizes the need to address not only people in the Middle East and the world, but also citizens of the United States using the means of communication that they use.⁸⁰

To be successful, the U.S. Government must develop a coherent, unified plan to use its informational instrument of national power. Otherwise, the government will continue to over-rely on the military, diplomacy, and economy in the globally connected twenty-first century. Studies and recent experience clearly show that information must be utilized effectively in the current operational environment. The initial steps the government has taken to date are the right start, but that progress must continue to expand to develop a true information capability for the U.S. to be successful in the GWOT and in the 21st Century environment.

While the current national security strategy represents a first step in bringing strategic communications to the level of importance and resources that it needs, the government must continue to expand its use of information in order to use information as a true instrument of national power. To date, the government has relied on its unparalleled military might and economic strength in an attempt to achieve its national goals. The globally interconnected twenty-first century demands that the U.S. use an integrated

combination of its hard and soft power to be successful. Effectively integrating and using all instruments of national power will not only balance the way that the U.S. works with other nations, it will also allow the nation to use the right tools to solve the right problems and maintain its status as the sole superpower.

Appendix A: Summary of takeaways from the Israeli-Palestinian case studies

1. Never assume you are on the moral high ground, and that you therefore don't need to message. (Perceptions of moral authority/legitimacy)
2. An intervening armed state tends to be seen as "Goliath", while non-state actors that resist are often cast as "David." (Perceptions of moral authority/legitimacy)
3. Targeting insurgent leaders won't stop the resistance and the resulting informational effects may fuel further radicalization. (Tactics versus strategy)
4. Direct action against a threat may create positive informational effects with home audiences, but negative informational effects in the COIN theatre. (Informational effects: challenge of different audiences)
5. When a campaign's strategic narrative contradicts the observed realities of your soldiers on the ground, it can hollow out the army's morale. (Informational effects: challenge of different audiences)
6. Eliminating insurgents won't stop the resistance or the terror tactics. (Tactics versus strategy)
7. When it comes to rumors of war-fighting gone wrong, the first stories onto the wire stick. Even if these stories prove to be exaggerated or false, the damage to your reputation, and moral legitimacy, is hard to erase. (Information sequel: perceptions of moral authority)
8. Humanitarian action undertaken to limit civilian casualties should be documented and communicated before, during and after action. (Informational sequel and prequel: perceptions of legitimacy; preempting and dispelling rumors)
9. Even if you don't trust certain media, engage them. Restricting media gives an informational advantage to your adversary. (Information management: perceptions of legitimacy)
10. Western democracies have low tolerance for the moral ambiguities of kinetic action. This is especially so when, in the heat of battle, mistakes or civilian casualties occur. Kinetic action that violates the law of war creates informational effects that decrease domestic and Western support. (Informational effects: perceptions of legitimacy)
11. Political messages that target domestic audiences can spillover to other audiences, and create detrimental informational effects in the COIN theater. (Informational effects: GIE and challenge of different audiences)
12. Cohesive all-of-government coordination can yield synchronization of the message, but not necessarily the effects. (Informational effects: perceptions of legitimacy/perception management)
13. Information Operations need to keep going, even after the physical action is over. (Information sequel: perception management)⁸¹

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